

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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**AGENDA ITEM #11**

March 10, 2000

To: Delta Protection Commission

From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director
Commissioner Bill Curry, Department of Boating and Waterways

Subject: Recreation Planning of the Ad Hoc Recreation Group
(For Commission Information Only)

What is the Ad Hoc Recreation Group?

The Ad Hoc Recreation Group, made up of representatives of several State agencies, boating and recreational fishing groups, and local government recreation managers, has been meeting with the CALFED staff regarding actions proposed for Stage IA of CALFED implementation.

What is the goal of the Ad Hoc Recreation Group?

The goal of the group is to assist CALFED in identifying unique opportunities to provide new recreational opportunities that tie in with or benefit from the proposed CALFED actions. The goal is to help CALFED go beyond mitigation requirements to new enhancements that will build support for the overall CALFED program from a broader spectrum of the public.

General Comments of the Ad Hoc Recreation Group to CALFED re: Recreation in the Delta:

- CALFED should develop a Deltawide recreation vision/master plan now.
- CALFED should strive to fully understand existing recreation activities, facilities, and uses in the North and South Delta planning areas.
- CALFED should ensure that proposals that would impact surface water elevations will not adversely impact recreational uses, existing recreation facilities, water quality, or water temperatures.
- CALFED should protect and enhance the water quality in the Delta for aquatic habitat and for water contact recreation.
- CALFED should take advantage of publicly owned lands and publicly owned facilities to provide facilities for the general public.

- CALFED should partner with private facility owners/managers to provide needed facilities for the public, with the private facility owners/managers providing oversight and maintenance.
- CALFED should partner with private interests, local governments, and special districts to provide needed recreational facilities in the Delta. In cases where local governments do not have adequate funds for operation and maintenance of recreation facilities, CALFED could provide assistance in establishing an endowment fund for local governments to utilize in operating and maintaining recreation facilities.
- There should be coordination between water quality actions proposed under the CALFED Program and water quality improvement efforts of recreational boaters (i.e., funding pumpouts, waste disposal facilities, and restrooms).
- Plans to enhance habitat for a single species should not be detrimental to habitat or species downstream.
- CALFED should protect and enhance the habitat of important game fish in the Delta.

Needs Identified in the 1997 Delta Recreation Survey prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation for Delta Protection Commission and the Department of Boating and Waterways:

- Sewage Pump-Out Facilities.
- Courtesy Docks.
- Shoreline Access.
- Public Restrooms (on land and floating).
- Swimming Beaches.
- Fishing Piers.
- Other Fishing Access.
- Bicycle Trails.
- Hiking Trails.
- Hunting Areas.
- Fish Cleaning Stations.

SOUTH DELTA:

Existing Recreation in the South Delta Area:

CALFED staff described the existing recreation uses including water-skiing in the Grant Line Canal. It was noted there is very little recreation use in Middle River. CALFED staff said boat uses have been monitored for several years as to number and size of boats, and boating activities.

CALFED-Identified Recreation Opportunities in the South Delta:

CALFED staff indicated that proposed dredging would clear the waterways of debris and obstructions which can adversely impact recreation. Staff said there might be fishing

access at the barriers. Finally, staff said there could be enhanced fishing access, such as fishing piers, at the Clifton Court Forebay.

Comments of the Ad Hoc Recreation Group on the South Delta:

- The boat locks should provide public restrooms, docks, and other public use facilities if accessible by public roads, and if the facilities would not create conflicts with adjacent land uses (agriculture).
- Big Break is being acquired by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and is suitable for development of trails and small boat activities.
- EBRPD is interested in continuing construction of trails along appropriate shoreline areas.
- Clifton Court Forebay is publicly owned and is suitable for development of trails and fishing, and associated recreational uses.
- Areas which are being developed (Mountain House, Gold Rush City, etc) should incorporate fishing access areas, scenic overlooks, wildlife observation sites, trails, and other appropriate public recreation facilities.
- The barrier at Middle River should be re-evaluated as to the appropriateness of a boat trailer versus a boat lock.
- Develop appropriate fishing rules for Clifton Court Forebay, which will help eliminate predators.
- Enhance Franks Tract for recreation and wildlife habitat.
- Dredging programs need a maintenance component.
- Ensure that the fish screens at the project pumps will benefit recreational fishing.
- Evaluate levees to determine if public facilities can be linked with trails (example: Dos Rios Park and Mossdale).
- Encourage information kiosks/signage.
- Encourage shoreline trails and paths in urban waterfront areas.
- Encourage installation and maintenance of public restrooms.
- Encourage installation and maintenance of public docks/landings in Delta waterfront communities to allow access from the waterways to the communities and their visitor-serving facilities.
- Encourage construction of launching facilities for small, car-top boats.
- Ensure that new facilities meet ADA requirements.
- Protect and enhance the water quality in the Delta for aquatic habitat and for water contact recreation.

[NOTE: Specific locations for recreation improvements in the South Delta have not yet been identified by the Ad Hoc Recreation Group]

NORTH DELTA:

Existing Recreation in the North Delta Area and Impacts to Recreation:

There are a number of marinas in the Walnut Grove area on the Sacramento River and on the Mokelumne River. In addition, there is a public fishing access site (Sacramento County) on Georgiana Slough, and a State River Park on Snodgrass Slough (between Locke and McCormack Williamson Tract) including about 250 acres of water-covered lands just acquired by State Parks. These water-covered lands are very popular for summer mooring by houseboats and other boats. The study area is also popular for fishing from shore and from boats, and canoeing. The Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is within the study area; the Refuge has no permanent facilities for public use but does provide docent-guided access from time to time.

None of the proposed actions would adversely impact recreational activities. Modification of the operation of the Cross Channel gates could impact small boat traffic if the gates were closed in the summer months. In addition, if waters are diverted into the area from an intake at Hood, the water elevations in the North Delta could be higher during May to September possibly impacting recreational facilities.

CALFED Proposed Recreational Improvements:

- Unidentified Improvements on McCormack Williamson Tract.
- Delta Loop Bicycle Trail and Restrooms.

General Comments of the Ad Hoc Recreation Group on North Delta:

- Enhance facilities at existing Sacramento County facilities at Georgiana Slough (better restroom; fishing access; picnic facilities; trails); the County could manage improvements.
- Provide public facilities at McCormack Williamson Tract (wildlife viewing; trail; fishing access; restroom); Nature Conservancy could manage improvements.
- Provide public facilities at Delta Meadows River Park (small boat launch ramp; boating trails; pumpout facility; fishing access; trails; restroom; parking lot; camping areas; mooring areas); improvements could be managed by the State Park.
- Provide public facilities at Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (visitor's center; parking lot; restrooms; trails; wildlife viewing; educational programs); Fish and Wildlife Service could manage improvements.
- Provide bicycle/pedestrian trail and restrooms around the Delta Loop; Delta Loop business owners or Sacramento County could manage improvements.
- Support docks in the Delta communities to allow access from the waterways to the visitor-serving facilities in the communities, and to allow access to historic areas and buildings.
- Protect existing travel routes for boats.

Specific Locations for Recreation Improvements in the North Delta:

Public Restrooms and Sewage Pump-out Facilities:

- Delta Meadows River Park
- Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
- McCormack-Williamson Tract
- Brannan Andrus Levee Maintenance District 100 acre site (Seven Mile Slough and San Joaquin River)

Swimming Beaches and Shoreline Access:

- Examples include Boy Scout Beach, Steamboat Slough and B&W Resort

Bicycle and/or Hiking Trails:

- Delta Loop Waterfront
- McCormack Williamson Tract
- Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Hunting Areas:

- Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Non-Motorized Boating Trails:

- Delta Meadows River Park
- McCormack Williamson Tract

Fishing Piers/Other Shore Fishing Access, Fish Cleaning Stations:

- Delta Meadows River Park
- McCormack Williamson Tract
- Delta Cross Channel
- Brannan Andrus Levee Maintenance District 100 acre site (Seven Mile Slough and San Joaquin River)

Courtesy Docks:

- Isleton
- Courtland
- Hood
- McCormack Williamson Tract
- Delta Meadows River Park

Boater Destination Facilities:

- Delta Meadows River Park
- McCormack Williamson Tract
- Westgate Landing
- Georgiana Slough Fishing Access

Mitigation of Lost Boating Facilities and Activities:

- Delta Cross Channel: If closed during boating season, add a boat lock.
- Port of Sacramento: Reoperate lock at north end of the Deepwater Ship Channel

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